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MARITIME

Carnival to build ship terminal in Turks and Caicos

The cruise-liner port will be the territory's first.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS • **Carnival Cruise Lines** has agreed to build a cruise ship terminal, making it the first time big passenger liners will stop in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the chief minister said Wednesday.

The small British Caribbean territory of 20,000 residents east of the Bahamas is among the world's top dive destinations. The $35 million cruise ship port would be on the main island of Grand Turk, Chief Minister Michael Misick said.

Construction is set to begin in April, and the terminal is scheduled to be ready to receive ships by late 2005.

"[It] would be the most significant event that has ever taken place on that island," Misick said.

The chief minister added the presence of cruise ships would substantially boost economic development in Grand Turk and that the territory could compete with the Bahamas as a "new, exotic and distinctly different Caribbean cruise ship destination."

Miami-based Carnival Corp.'s vice president Giora Israel has confirmed the project.

The terminal will be able to accommodate super-sized cruise ships, some of which are more than 1,000 feet long and can carry more than 3,500 passengers, officials said.

Previously, tourists could arrive at the islands only by air or small ferry.

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